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THE

DOCTRINE of the TRINITY

STATED, PROVED, and DEFENDED,

IN

A S E R M O N,

PREACHED on TRINITY SUNDAY, MAY 25, 1777,

In JEWRY-STREET-CHAPEL, ALDGATE,

By the Rev. Mr. *W. ALDRIDGE*.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

Καὶ οὗτοι οἱ τρεῖς ἐν εἰσι, I JOHN, v. 7.

Ἐπεράγματος.

L O N D O N,

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T H E
P R E F A C E.

THE subject of the following Sermon being exceeding weighty, and confessed to be of the greatest moment, the subsequent discourse on it hath been drawn up with earnest prayer to God for divine aid and spiritual illumination. Your requests who sit under my ministry, suggested to me the first thoughts of committing to public inspection and candor, what I had the same day delivered from the pulpit. To further your establishment in this important truth; to express (at least) my wishes to advance the glory of the adorable Trinity; to contribute my mite towards the elucidation and defence of this interesting point; to convince the erroneous, confirm the wavering, and strengthen the weak, are the ends designed and pursued in the following pages. Men of corrupt minds, and reprobate concerning the faith, existed even in the times of apostolic power and glory. That corruption which maintained

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*maintained its hold, and resisted every medicine, still is diabolically active, and big with ruin. The seeds of error sown by the Father of falsehood, fermented, and having forced their way through every surrounding tegument of opposition, soon shot through many parts of the eastern world; restless in their nature, and violent in their operation, they stretched into the western hemisphere also; where their pernicious influence is too obvious not to be known, and too destructive not to be lamented. To oppose the doctrine here asserted, is considered by some as a mark of a cultivated and polished understanding; and to refuse credit to what cannot be fully comprehended, make up the leading article of their creed. But with every real or fancied accomplishment, a little self acquaintance would shake this tower of human pride, and make it totter; would convince the most knowing, that our intellects are very circumscribed and perfectly puerile in these matters; our conceptions little, and reason lame upon both legs. This necessary instruction would make us see, that the sun may more easily be confined within the limits of a nut shell, than the infinite perfections of God be comprehended by a finite mind. But, alas! neither the dogmas of Aristotle, nor the airy dreams of Plato, nor the lattered sayings of Seneca; not a whole tribe of learned sages can
teach*

The P R E F A C E. v.

teach this humbling lesson. 'Tis read in the Bible, believed and relished by the teaching of the eternal Spirit. Blessed be God, we can be assured of the truth when we cannot answer all the difficulties that encounter it. A weak understanding is capable of the first, and taught from above shall not err therein; the second is so difficult, even in the most familiar things, that the deepest philosopher is not able to untie all the knotty objections which may be urged against them. I have not pressed metaphysical subtilties into this service, nor admitted the curious enquiries of those who would not be thought ignorant of any thing; being persuaded, a greater progress is made in the knowledge and belief of the sublimest truths of Christianity, by humble prayer, than by nice and perplexing disquisitions. Scriptural ground hath been my stand, and my materials have been collected from thence; not neglecting other plain helps. Some small alterations from what was delivered in the pulpit may be observed, and indeed are almost unavoidable; especially on a point so interesting and deep, and where the speaker uses no written helps. If this mark a small difference between the pulpit and the press, yet my endeavors to render truth thereby more perspicuous will procure me an easy pardon. And now, Reader, I commend thee and this to the blessing and favor of

of

vi. The P R E F A C E.

*of my God, and I trust thine also. Pray for
light and walk in it; but be assured, a light
head and a cold heart is one of the saddest
connections, from which the Lord deliver thee.
Pray for power and thou shalt receive it.
Pray for the Author, who is thy soul's willing
and ready servant, for Jesu's sake,*

LONDON,
June 19, 1777.

W. ALDRIDGE.

A SHORT

A S H O R T
D E F E N C E
O F T H E

AUTHENTICITY of the T E X T.

TH E R E is scarcely a doctrine, however fully and clearly revealed in the Scriptures, that hath not been disputed, opposed and rejected. This is grievous, and much to be lamented; yet, whilst it awakens our compassion, cannot raise our wonder, when infidelity hath attempted to outlaw even the whole Bible itself. Some persons, professedly the friends of the Christian religion, have appeared among, and actually done what, its open and greatest enemies have been highly rejoiced at. The fashionable opinions these have received, strengthened by prejudice, and radicated by continuance, cannot bend, will not submit

mit ; but truth, like an inferior, must stand at a distance, uncover, and make a lowly bow to their High Mightinesses. Should a doctrine revealed, and shining in the Book of God, like the sun in the heavens, have the misfortune to clash with their sentiments ; their dexterity will twist and wire-draw the passages which support it ; (no matter how their features are distorted) or they will venture to arraign the sacred Text itself, and affect to doubt its authenticity. Thus pretended friends and avowed foes unite to wound and murder truth.

The Text selected for the following Discourse, hath been severely handled by this sort of persons. Anti-trinitarians have questioned its genuineness, and taken no small pains to prove it spurious. It is asserted, “ These words are not in some
“ ancient manuscript Greek copies ; nor
“ in some old versions made from them ;
“ nor quoted by some primitive writers,
“ in their controversies with the Arians.” Though I do not pretend to have waded through antiquity ; or to an intimate acquaintance with the Fathers, yet I hope the following remarks will remove every scruple, and free the Text from those difficulties with which designing men have endeavoured to embarrass it. It must how-
ever

ever be observed, the doctrine of the blessed Trinity is grounded upon the whole Scriptures, and not on a particular passage, so that could it be proved this Text wanted those suffrages which demonstrate its authenticity, and which the opposers of this doctrine seem much concerned to discredit, yet the truth must stand while the Scriptures themselves remain.

1. These words are found in copies of great antiquity, and best credit. 2. Not a few very ancient writers cite this verse; Cyprian, who wrote before Arius was born, in the third century, and suffered martyrdom for Christ in the year 260; he, in his book *De Unit. Ecclesiæ*, * hath these words, *Dicit Dominus, ego et Pater Unum sumus; et iterum, de Patre, et Filio, et Spiritu Sancto, Scriptum est, et hi Tres Unum sunt.* † So likewise Tertullian, *Contra Praxeam; qui Tres Unum sunt.* 3. Hierome, a man of great learning and eloquence, who had read almost all the ecclesiastical Writers, who had written before him, assures us, almost all the copies in his time had the words in question. 4. The same Writer affirms, these

* The Unity of the Church.

† The Lord says, I and my Father are One; and again, Of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, it is written, and these Three are One.

these words were expunged by the Arians, (which is the reason why they were not found in some copies) divers other learned and judicious men do conceive they were blotted out in the times of Constantius and Valens, emperors, sworn enemies of the blessed Trinity, and professed patrons of Arianism. 5. The drift of the Apostle in this Epistle is a strong proof the words are genuine, which is to confirm the true doctrine of Christ against Ebion and Cerinthus, hereticks, who denied the Deity of the Lord Jesus. In this fifth chapter he maintains *Jesus is the Christ*, i. e. *the true God*, and true man; our Mediator and Saviour, which he proves by witnesses human and divine.

Of those in the earth he speaks verse 8, of those in heaven, verse 7, of the human, verse 18, and then adds, verse 9, *If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater*; from whence it manifestly appears, he had spoken of six witnesses, three in heaven and three upon earth. 6. and last. The diversity of the very nature of those three who bear witness on earth, and the unity of their divine nature who bear witness in heaven is convincing, and shew the same hand wrote both; they are excellently expressed in the variation of the phrase,

phrase, *These Three are One* in nature, verse 7, *And these Three agree in One*, verse 8, namely in one testimony; though their nature be different, yet their testimony is the same. If the design and drift of the Apostle be manifest; if the testimony of those, to this truth, who lived in the first ages, and whose sincerity cannot be doubted, having sealed their doctrine with their blood, be admitted, they unquestionably prove, notwithstanding the cavils of captious men, the words to be written by the hand that wrote the rest, and dictated by the same Divine Spirit.

A SERMON,

the first of these is the fact that the
the second is the fact that the
the third is the fact that the
the fourth is the fact that the
the fifth is the fact that the
the sixth is the fact that the
the seventh is the fact that the
the eighth is the fact that the
the ninth is the fact that the
the tenth is the fact that the

A S E R M O N, &c.

I JOHN, v. 7.

FOR THERE ARE THREE THAT BEAR
RECORD IN HEAVEN, THE FATHER,
THE WORD, AND THE HOLY GHOST,
AND THESE THREE ARE ONE.

TH E scheme of man's salvation,
planned by infinite wisdom, and
accomplished by boundless love, is
the wonder of angels, and the joy
and admiration of the elect. Thoroughly
corrupted, and totally lost as to help from
himself; divine compassion provided means
to save ruined man, and divine power ren-
ders those means effectual. These me-
thods are revealed in the Bible, and what
immediately concerns a sinner's salvation,
so plain, that *a way-faring Christian, though*
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in other matters, a fool, shall not err therein; yet others so deep, as to be the objects of holy astonishment, not of perfect knowledge. The doctrines of the sacred Trinity and incarnation are stumbling blocks to the Jews, and to the Greeks foolishness; to many nominal teachers in the Christian Church, they become objects of contention and discredit; being masters of the knack of quarrelling with God, rather than falling out with themselves. But to those who are called, they are the wisdom and the power of God. This doctrine of the triune Jehovah, like the vapor ascending from the face of nature, breathes from the whole inspired volume. The doctrine of a Trinity of persons in the Unity of the divine essence is, without controversy, a great mystery of godliness, and as none can call Jesus Lord, or confess him to be Jehovah, but by the Holy Ghost; so none will subscribe to, or heartily believe this important truth, untaught from above, and uncompelled by sovereign grace.

In dependence upon divine assistance, I propose to consider and prove.

I. The Unity of the divine essence, or that there is but one God.

II. That there are three distinct persons subsisting in the Unity of the divine essence.

III. That

III. That these are not three Gods, but one.

IV. The reasonableness of this doctrine.

V. The uses to be made thereof by all real Christians.

That to Christians, there is but one God, sufficiently appears by express testimonies of Scripture; I shall cite a few of them. Deut. vi. 4. *Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.* 1 Sam. ii. 2. *There is none holy as the Lord, for there is none beside thee.* Psal. xviii. 31. *For who is God, save the Lord.*—Isaiah is pregnant with proofs of this truth. Isa. xlv. 6. *Thus saith the Lord the king of Israel, and his redeemer, the Lord of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last, and besides me there is no God.* Chap. xlv. 5, 6. *I am the Lord, and there is none else; there is no God besides me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: that they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the West, that there is none besides me; I am the Lord, and there is none else.* Chap. xlv. 9. *Remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me.* These are a few of the many proofs wherewith the Old Testament abounds. Supported by these authorities, the Jews were, and still remain warm advocates for the Unity of the divine essence; and

and when the veil is taken away, they will as warmly contend for, and as gratefully acknowledge the distinction of persons. The New Testament looks to the Old, like a younger brother to the elder, and confesses its priority; whilst the Old freely allows its own features to be less lucid, yet rejoices to see the New, and receives light and strength from it. They think and speak the same thing; and therefore are one in sentiment on this subject. Our Lord cites that text, Mark xii. 29. *Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.* His Apostles speak the same language. St. Paul tells us, Rom. iii. 30. *It is one God, who shall justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith.* So 1 Cor. viii. 6. *To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus, by whom are all things, and we by him.* Again, Eph. iv. 6. *One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.* In the mouth of two unquestionable witnesses this divine truth is established; witnesses, whose testimony brightens with age, and will be the most effulgent when time itself expires. Reason adds, as there is but one God declared and acknowledged in the sacred volume, and as we are commanded to love, reverence and obey him only, with the utmost latitude of all our powers, so to admit

admit any other, would be a direct violation of the divine injunction, and a species of shocking idolatry. God is infinite, independent, omniscient, almighty; but to be all-powerful, to know all things, to depend on none, to be uncircumscribed, can be ascribed to one only, and would be absurd and ridiculous in any to conceive otherwise. But is there not mention made in Scripture of more gods than one? there is, yet they are properly no gods; the gods of the Heathen were false gods; dunghill gods, or devil gods. Angels, civil magistrates, judges, are called gods, only in relation to their created dignity, or offices. The Devil is nominated a god, because of the power and rule, he is permitted to exercise in the world. The belly is likewise called a god, because, by a carnal man, its desires are complied with, and its commands punctually obeyed. All therefore called gods, whether angels, men or devils, on account of any dignity received and enjoyed, or in a metaphorical sense, or because of any power they are suffered to exert, not being so by nature, are properly no gods, and so are not objects of divine worship.

In contradistinction to all nominal gods, we read of the nature of the true God, θεῶν
Rom. i. 20. *i. e. natura Dei incomprehensibilis;*

lis; propria Dei substantia, sive essentia, quâ et omnia replet et super omnia est; which is, the inconceivable nature of God; the proper substance or essence of God, by which he both fills and rules all things. As we are forbid to give divine honor to any of those which are not gods by nature, so the Apostle reproves their idolatry, *who when they knew God, (that is, the only true God, who is God by nature) they did service to them which by nature are no gods:* Who then is able to sound the depth of his inscrutable nature, whose immense perfection is like a sea (if such existed) which hath neither banks, or bottom? Who can fathom a bottomless deep, or define an infinite perfection?

II. Having proved the Unity of the divine essence, or that there is but one living and true God, I proceed in the second place, as proposed, to prove there are three distinct persons in this divine essence. But what is a person in the blessed Trinity? the answer is, whole God, not simply or absolutely considered, but by way of some personal proprieties; a manner of being in the Godhead, having the whole in it. A divine person is nothing, but the divine essence, on the account of an especial property subsisting in an especial manner. For the substance

stance or nature is the same in all three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. These three glorious persons are distinguished, from each other; and yet they do subsist in one another. They are distinguished, yet not divided; united, yet not confounded. The deep things of God, which we believe, because revealed, with deep humility, reverence and adore, whilst we cannot comprehend them.

The Father's personality being scarcely questioned, a few things will suffice on this head. Creation, providence, preservation, and resurrection, are all personal actions, and are ascribed to the Father; *Jehovah*, that is, *I am that I am*; *Elohim*, that is, *strong and mighty*; *Adonah*, that is, *judge*; *Lord of Hosts*; *the God of Jacob*, are personal names given to the first person in the adorable Trinity. It should be remembered, by this word, first person, we are not to understand any priority in nature or time, but as it relates to order only, and in this sense it is used in the Scriptures. For they all three exist together, and necessarily exist, and subsist distinctly by themselves in one uninvestigable nature.

2. The names, characters, and actions, ascribed in Scripture to God the Son, demonstrate him to be a divine person. He
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is called *Prophet, Priest, Prince, King of Saints, Wonderful, Counsellor, Advocate, Mediator, Redeemer, and Saviour*. These with many more are given to the second person in the blessed Trinity. *Creation, redemption, intercession, salvation*, are applied to him. He subsists of himself, lives, wills, and understands. He hath life in himself, and is the author of life in others. He hath a distinct will from the will of the first person, though not opposite to it. As, *Father, I will, that those whom thou hast given me, &c.* John xvii. 24. In fine, his satisfaction, sacrifice, ascension into heaven, his session at the right hand of God; his mediation, and judging the world at the last Day, with all the attending circumstances, prove him to be a person, a divine person, and a distinct person from the Father and the Holy Ghost.

3. The Scriptures maintain, he is God, equal with the Father, in the most express terms; he is called *the mighty God, the everlasting Father*, Isa. ix. 6. *A just God, and a Saviour, who says, look unto me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth*, Isaiah xlv. 22, 23. The author of the epistle to the Hebrews cites Psal. xlv. 6. *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever*; and applies it to Christ, Heb. i. 8. The Apostle John most explicitly

citly calls him God, who made the worlds, and all their noble furniture. John i. 1, 2, 3. *The true God, and eternal life by him.* 1 John, v. 20. And again, *Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us,* 1 John, iii. 16. The Apostle of the Gentiles preached the same truth to his son Timothy, *Great is the mystery of Godliness, God manifested in the flesh,* 1 Tim. iii. 16. The same Apostle calls him, *God over all, blessed for ever,* and binds the truth with an hearty *Amen*, Rom. ix. 5. Thomas, with great astonishment, and with as great understanding and truth, calls him, *My Lord and my God*, John xx. 28. and is not reprov'd, is not discountenanced, but kindly received with the open confession in his mouth. Jude is directed by the Spirit to pronounce him the *Only wise God, our Saviour*. The word *Only*, conveniently and fully distinguishes him from all nominal gods, whether called so ironically, as Elijah named Baal, 1 Kings, xviii. 27. or on account of any created dignity they enjoy, or of any honorable commission they are charged with the execution of. Blessed be God, here is good measure, pressed down, and running over. May the holy Spirit fasten the truth upon all who read it.

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4. The Godhead doth subsist in the Lord Jesus, who, being equal to the Father, doth subsist in the nature of God. The word, Phil. ii. 6. *ὑπάρχων* translated being, probably is better rendered subsisting in that place, there being, as some suppose, a comparison between two subsistences, or persons, the Father and the Son; and therefore the latter counts *it no robbery* to be equal with the former, forasmuch as he subsists in the same nature. He hath therefore the same divine nature with the Father, and all the fulness of the Godhead dwells, truly, really, and bodily in the Son. Jesus says, John xvi. 15. *All things that the Father hath are mine*; this is an unrestrained claim laid to all things; we learn the plain reason, in very plain words, John x. 30. *I and my Father are one. Unum, non modò consensu et concordia*; one, not only by consent and agreement, as Arians would teach it to speak, *sed naturâ et potentia*, but one in nature and power also. By this word *unum*, the unity of the divine nature is plainly expressed; by the word *sumus*, the distinct subsistence of the Father and the Son is as plainly asserted. From whence 'tis evident, Christ hath the same divine nature with the Father; they both have the same divine and essential titles and attributes,

attributes, and perform the same inward operations, in reference to all creatures whatsoever. Jesus Christ is *Emmanuel*, *God with us*, Matt. i. 23. That very God who took flesh and blood, 1 Tim. iii. 16. and that compassionate God, who gave that matchless expression of his love, by redeeming his church *with his own blood*, Acts xx. 28. Christ is the illustrious brightness of his Father's glory, the lively character of his subsistence or person, Heb. i. 3.

5. Let us now view the divine attributes, which in Scripture are ascribed to God the Son, which evince his deity, and indubitably determine the sense of the passages already produced, to prove him to be very God. Eternity is ascribed to the Lord Jesus. *In the beginning was the word*, before any creation, and prior to any creature, John i. 1. *His goings forth have been of old from everlasting*, Micah v. 2. *He is the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end*, Rev. i. 8, 17. Jesus Christ is omnipotent, Phil. iii. 21. irresistible in the exertions of his power, *being able to conquer and subdue all things unto himself*. He is therefore called *the Almighty*, Rev. i. 8. He made all things, John i. 3. Col. i. 16, 17. *For by him were all things created, that are in heaven,*
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and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things συνέστηκε do hang together. Mutations are the characteristics which distinguish creatures; even devils may change from bad to worse, while suffering the vengeance of eternal fire, Jude 7. The encreasing dignity and glory of angels, and blessed spirits, pronounce some change of accumulated glory, while beholding and eternally adoring the inconceivable majesty of God; but Jesus, being God, is incapable of any change, which would imply imperfection, and therefore is said to be *unchangeable*, Heb. i. 12. *The same yesterday, to-day, and for ever*. Christ is omniscient, John ii. 25. and the searcher of hearts; and all the churches shall know that *I am He, which searcheth the reins and hearts*. Rev. ii. 23. He knows all things, John xxi. 17. He is the wisdom of God, 1 Cor. i. 24. All the treasures of wisdom are in him; *in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*, Col. ii. 3. Immenfity is his, his divine presence cannot be confined to any place, nor circumscribed by any bounds; *Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world*, Matt. xxviii.

20. Ten thousand assemblies of his people are favored with his presence, and blessed with his spiritual consolations, at the same instant; for, *where two or three are met in my name, there am I in the midst of them.* Should they reach the northern frigid zone, or stretch to the southern pole, if they widen in the eastern, or expand in the western climes, *there am I in the midst*; high and low, near and remote, have place with regard to creatures, but are *non-entities* as referred to Jesus Christ.

Jesus performs the works of God, such proper and peculiar, such divine and supernatural works, as none but God can perform; he raised the dead by his own power, and at his own pleasure, John v. 21, 28, 29. He is called *the resurrection and the life*, John xi. 25. because he is the author of both, *Whatsoever the Father doth, the Son doth likewise*, John v. 17, 19. He doth regenerate our souls, pardon our sins; he gives temporal, spiritual, and eternal life, 2 Cor. v. 17. John vi. 38, 40. Divine honour is due to Jesus Christ. All the glorious angels are commanded to worship him, Heb. i. 6. All are charged to give the same honour to Christ, which they are required to give to the Father, John v. 23. Baptism is administered in the name and
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to the honor of Christ, Matt. xxviii. 17, &c.

From all that hath been said, it is easy to infer, that God will not give his glory to another, because he is true; and cannot, because he is just; and that though Christ be a distinct person, yet he is not a distinct God from the Father, but one and the same Jehovah, with him equal in power and glory. Much more might have been adduced, but this is sufficient, if God the Spirit set it home upon our spirits. But if men will not be persuaded by these plain and undeniable testimonies of Scripture, neither would they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead. Seruples have troubled, and doubts distressed, even honest hearts, upon reading those passages of Scripture which speak of the weariness, hunger, and thirst of Christ, which mention his offering up prayer with strong cries and tears, his weeping, bleeding, and dying: such should remember, he was perfect man, as well as perfect God; and therefore, those properties of the human nature, above recited, could not but appear to demonstrate the reality of it. Had he not been man, he could not have died; had he not been God, his sacrifice for mankind would have been abhorred. Those evidences then of
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the truth of his human nature should not nourish reasonings to his dishonor, much less furnish men with matter to quarrel with the truth, because he was what he must be, true man, as well as perfect God. The divine and human nature are united in him, though not confounded; and in each of these natures, he acts according to the essential properties and principles of that nature. As God, he made the worlds, and upholds both heaven and earth; as man, he lived, suffered, &c. To make this plainer still, I shall add a rule or two, drawn up ready to my hands, and then proceed to prove the distinct personality and Godhead of the Holy Ghost.

1. Distinction and inequality, in respect of office in Christ, doth not in the least take away his equality and sameness with the Father, in respect of nature and essence. Phil. ii. 7, 8.

2. The advancement and exaltation of Christ, as mediator, to any dignity whatever, upon, or in reference to the work of our redemption and salvation, is not at all inconsistent with the essential honour, dignity and worth, which he hath in himself, as God, blessed for ever. Though he humbled himself, and was exalted in office, yet
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in nature, he was one and the same, he changed not.

3. The Scriptures asserting the humanity of Christ, with the concernments thereof, as his birth, life, and death, do no more thereby deny his deity, than, by asserting his deity, with the essential properties thereof, they deny his humanity.

4. The dignity and glory said to be given him, in consideration of undertaking and accomplishing the work of redemption, refer to him as mediator; and in reading such expressions, he must be viewed in office, and not in his divine nature, absolutely considered; for in that respect, he was incapable of any additional glory.

1. The names and actions ascribed to the blessed Spirit prove him to be a divine person, distinct from the Father and the Son. Blessed be God, here also, we have scriptural evidence sufficient to demonstrate the truth; several witnesses of unquestionable veracity are at hand to establish the very interesting, though heretically, much contested doctrine.

A *Sanctifier*, *Reprover*, *Witness*, *Comforter*, are personal characters, and all applied to the Holy Ghost, and therefore prove him to be a person, a divine person.

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To teach or instruct is undeniably a personal character; our Lord says to his Disciples, *It shall be given you in that same hour, what ye shall speak; for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you*, Matt. x. 19, 20. To witness or testify is a personal character; and we are his witnesses, and so is the Holy Ghost, Acts v. 32. This the Apostles affirm before the enraged jewish council: *The Holy Ghost witnesseth, that in every city, bonds and afflictions abide me*, Acts xx. 23. He is said to dwell with us, and our bodies are called *the temples of the Holy Ghost*. Acting with sovereign will and pleasure is confined to personal description, and evinces personal subsistence and action; this applied to the blessed Spirit; *the Holy Ghost said, separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them. So they being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed*, Acts xiii. 2, 4. Prohibiting, forbidding, or restraining from action is personal, this ascribed to the third person of the blessed Trinity; the Apostles *were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia*, Acts xvi. 6. To select, constitute or appoint to the execution of an office, is likewise personal; this the divine Spirit said to do; *over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers*, Acts xx.

28. The distribution of diversities of gifts is most plainly ascribed to the eternal Spirit; *Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; for to one is given by the Spirit, the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues. But all these worketh that one and the self same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will, 1 Cor. xii. 4, 8, 9, 10, 11.* The Apostle having in these verses distinguished the Spirit from the gifts of the Spirit, shews, that the Spirit himself, that one Spirit, that one and self same Spirit, doth work and distribute all those excellent gifts as he pleases. These terms therefore, *that one, that same Spirit*, the will of the Spirit, the discriminating energy of the Spirit, do all demonstrate the subsistence of the Spirit, and the peculiarity of his subsistence.

Personal affections are ascribed to him; we read of the *love of the Spirit*; that he may be *grieved, rebelled against, and vexed*; that he may be *lied unto, blasphemed*, and have sin, and that irremissible, committed against

against him, which to affirm of any thing, but a person, would be preposterous and ridiculous.

Our Lord assured his Disciples, that *when he the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth*, John xvi. 13. he saith not it, but he, and therefore doth not speak of a power or quality, but a person; he, the Spirit, which is the more to be observed, because the word *τὸ πνεῦμα*, which signifies Spirit, is of the neuter gender; yet the Lord, speaking of the Spirit, saith, he, doubtless, to point out the peculiar subsistence, or personality of the Holy Ghost.

He is represented as a distinct person in the form of baptism, which is administered in the name and to the honor of the Holy Ghost; we must therefore either renounce our baptism in his name, or else confess we are obliged to believe in him, reverence, love, obey, and glorify him, with all inward and outward worship; for we are debtors to the Spirit also.

The proper Deity of the blessed Spirit may be ascertained from the divine names given to him, and the divine perfections he is possessed of. It is said, *the same Spirit who doth work all in all is the same Lord, and the same God*, 1 Cor. xii. 5, 6. Now Lord, in the New Testament, doth answer to
Jehovah

Jehovah in the Old. This is manifest, *Thou shalt fear Jehovah thy God*, Deut. vi. 13. x. 20. is rendered by the Evangelist, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God*, Matt. iv. 10. So Deut. vi. 5. *Thou shalt love Jehovah thy God* is rendered, Matt. xxii. 37. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God*. These instances, among others, prove the term Jehovah, in the Old Testament, to be rendered Lord in the New; and as it is there applied to the second; so here, 1 Cor. xii. 5, 6. it is ascribed to the third person in the adorable Trinity. I may conclude therefore, that they are each Jehovah, each God over all, blessed for ever.

The omnipotence of the Spirit is clear, for he works miracles which transcend, not only the common course and order, but the whole power of nature; such are the raising the dead, Rom. viii. 11. The regeneration and sanctification of our souls, Titus iii. 5. 1 Cor. vi. 11. He overshadowed the blessed Virgin Mary; he taught the Prophets, for they *spake as they were moved by him*, 2 Peter, i. 21.

The divine Spirit is omnipresent, he dwells in all Saints, as in a temple; he repairs, adorns, and beautifies his own temples. It is impossible to shun his presence, because ubiquity is essential to his nature; overwhelmed

overwhelmed with the majesty and glory of this attribute of the Spirit, the Psalmist asks, *Whither shall I flee from the presence of thy Spirit?* Psalm cxxxix. 7. He pervades universal nature, and is ever present with all things; what the heathen therefore affirmed of the Fates is most true of the blessed Spirit; *nullo fata (spiritum) loco possis excludere*, i. e. *the fates are every where*. Eternity is ascribed to him; he is called *the eternal Spirit*, Heb. ix. 14. Creation is ascribed to the Spirit, equally as to the Father and the Son; the Spirit moved upon the face of the great deep, Gen. i. 2. Was not volition as distinct in this act of the third, as it was in the second person of the blessed Trinity, when he said, *Father, I will, that those, &c.* Order sprung from disorder, peace from confusion. *Rudis indigestaque molis* is the picture of the original state of things, drawn by a student in the school of nature, and who, by ploughing with Moses, found out this riddle. The world, naked and unformed, acquires proportion, and puts on a new set of features; operations too mighty for the most exalted creature, but easily and instantly performed, by the divine agency of God the Spirit. I think it unquestionably appears, from the scriptural evidence produced, in confirmation of the

the doctrine here established, that the Father is Jehovah, the Son is Jehovah, and the Holy Ghost is Jehovah; that the Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, and the Holy Ghost is Lord; that the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God; and yet there are not three Jehovahs, nor three Lords, nor three Gods, but one only.

III. Which is the third thing to be proved, namely, that there are not three gods, but one. Here also divine testimony is no less explicit and full than on the former points. The Father and the Son are but one God; *I and my Father are one*, John x. 30. *Εγὼ καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἓν ἐσμεν*, not one person, but one in essence; not one in testimony only, but one in nature also, it being expressed in the neuter gender. The same Apostle affirms, the Father, Son, and Spirit, all three are but one God; *there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one*. These three divine subsistences are *Ὅτι τρεῖς εἰσιν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες*, three testifiers, or witnesses, yet but one in nature. Omniscience, omnipotence, immensity, omnipresence, are justly ascribed to each of the divine persons, as hath been fully proved; yet there is, and can be but one, to whom all things are open and naked, but one unlimited, almighty,

mighty, ever present Jehovah. "But is
 "this intelligible?" it is scriptural. "Can
 "it be understood?" it is plainly revealed,
 and therefore must be credited, and is cor-
 dially believed by redeemed souls, upon the
 veracity of God, and by divine teaching.
 Curious reasoning should be put aside here;
 and humble prayer solicit, with docility of
 heart, Lord, open mine eyes; give divine
 wisdom liberally, and upbraid not an hum-
 ble petitioner.

Some learned, ingenious, and pious men,
 have endeavored to illustrate this mysteri-
 ous subject by natural things; I will not
 say how happily they have succeeded. 1.
 By the sun producing his own beams, and
 from thence proceed light and heat, and yet
 there is no priority, unless in order and re-
 lation. 2. From fire; so from one flame
 proceed both light and heat, and yet but one
 fire. 3. From water; in it there is the
 fountain-head, and the spring boiling out
 of it, and the stream flowing from them
 both, yet all these are but one water. 4.
 Suppose a person looks in a glass, and smiles;
 here the face is one being, the image of the
 face in the glass is another being, and the
 smiling of them both is a third being; yet
 all are in one face, and all are of one face,
 and all are but one face. Thus, men have
 attempted

attempted to explain what is confessed to be inexplicable.

IV. But we are to enquire, whether this be reasonable or not. The highest exercise of reason man is capable of, is the total submission of it to the wisdom of God. The unreasonableness of the contrary conduct hath occasioned much opposition to the doctrine of the blessed Trinity. Some of its opposers have racked their invention, and been ingeniously wicked, to urge new matter against it; others have contented themselves with collecting the stale, and hackney'd objections of former anti-trinitarians. Its mysterious and incomprehensible nature hath been pretended as the chief ground of their discredit. They appear much concerned for the honor and dignity of man, who, as we are told, "is able to scan and comprehend both heaven and earth;" priding themselves on this principle (false as it is) though the great Apostle may acknowledge, with holy admiration, *great is the mystery of godliness*, they being a compound of light and wisdom, assure us, "there is no such thing as mystery in the Bible." If any thing appear to be so, though in one or twenty passages of sacred writ, let them but just exercise their skill, and they all, Proteus like, instantly change their

their shape, alter their native voice, and speak any language. But thus, metamorphist, they would be as much disowned by the good old Apostles, as they are embraced by these pseudo teachers. But is it true, that a doctrine must be disclaimed, because not fully understood? must the goodness and compassion of the Lord be spurned at, because the arcana of his nature are not to be investigated?

Such doctrine as this renders the homely, but true speech of Zopher, seasonable and necessary; *vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild asses colt*, Job. xi. 12. To be profelyted to this wisdom is to commence Atheist at once. None can fully understand the excellencies of the divine nature; "But we are not to believe what we cannot fully comprehend;" therefore we must renounce all religion at once. But what are those excellencies or deep things of the divine nature? — That the essence and attributes of God are the same, without the least shadow of composition; yet his wisdom and power are to our apprehensions distinct, and his mercy and justice in some manner opposite. That his essence is entire in all places, yet not terminated in any. That he is above the heavens, and beneath the earth, yet hath no relation of high or

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low, distant or near. That he penetrates all substances, but is mixed with none. That in him time hath no succession, that which is past is not gone, and that which is future is not to come. That he loves without passion, is angry without disturbance, and repents without change. These perfections are not within the reach of reason, yet essential to the divine nature. But travelling from heaven to earth, and taking our views here; should we not say to these wise folks; too wise to be happy, and too good to be saved by grace alone! “ Till
 “ you can remember, and recount to us,
 “ when that thinking, throbbing particle
 “ within, first resolved to wear a body,
 “ when it spun out its arteries, fibres and
 “ veins, contrived the warm circulating
 “ stream that runs through them; when
 “ you first ventured to let the heart pant,
 “ the lungs suck air, and at last to launch
 “ the whole tender machine into the hazard
 “ of motion; till you can acquaint us with
 “ all this, should you not knuckle to the
 “ truth, confess you are vile and brutish;
 “ and with an heart, penetrated with a true
 “ conviction of your ignorance, pray, O
 “ *Lord, what I know not, that teach thou*
 “ *me?*”

V. Lastly,

V. Lastly, I am to consider, what use true Christians are to make of this scriptural and interesting doctrine.

1. Reflect on your former selves, what were your thoughts, and what your conduct? probably you were among the gay and thoughtless; amusing yourselves with vanity, or lulled in the fascinating lap of pleasure, *Living without God in the world*; or did busy thoughts now and then obtrude, and embitter the sweets of sin, by whispering, "there is an awful hereafter, and thou must come to judgment?" Perplex'd and disturbed, you ventured to own religion, and commenced an acquaintance with the professors of it. But the children of Socinus, and the large family of Arius, have no small regard for religion also. These treating with sovereign contempt, righteousness and life by Christ alone, can, like the silk worm, spin shining threads (to make both) out of their own bowels, though they die in the work; not alas! like the innocent insect, but as the criminal opposers of the free-grace and rich mercy of God in Jesus. Have you escaped these? Is your wisdom become folly, your righteousness very tattered, yea, *filthy rags*, your strength weakness itself? under these convictions of your wretchedness, you accepted with unspeakable

Speakable gratitude, not a patched, but a whole, not a mutilated, but an entire and free salvation. Remember the enemies of the dignity and glory of Christ are your enemies; yet hate them not, bless God, whose grace made the difference, and pity and pray for them.

2. Consider who made you see and confess the truth; receive, enjoy, and live it: the god of this world blinded your eyes, together with others; and thus blinded, you might have stumbled on, fell, and rose no more; or rudely persisted to have *denied the Lord that bought you*, had the divine purchaser been as willing to relinquish his just claim to you, as you were to renounce all inheritance in him. Not easily subdued, you contended and resisted; and confessed at last, that no power less than divine could make you yield. The truth is clear; *no man can call Jesus Lord, but by the Holy Ghost*. The Spirit produced the change, and the hearty acknowledgment was the effect of his gracious operation. If God the Spirit were the powerful agent, who wrought this in you, see that you are tender of his honor, maintain his dignity, and exalt his glory; tremble at thoughts derogatory of either; and strengthen your faith
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in him, by meditations on your obligations to him.

3. Pray for full establishment in the doctrine of the Godhead of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; collect the scriptural evidence that hath been given; read over the proofs again and again; commit them to memory, and lay them up there, as armour ready prepared to engage an enemy on his approach; yet the same kind of faith which gave force to the *sling*, and direction to the *stone* of the *son of Jesse*, will be necessary in the use of these weapons; and when thus handled, unbelief itself will quake, and seem to die, at least for the time. External foes will be foiled, because God is with you. You know, *Philip* could not see the Father in Jesus, till instructed by his divine master; but that instruction drew forth, *now we know, and are sure, &c.* You freely confess (and your confession is true) if Jesus were not the true God, he could not expiate your guilt; you durst not stake your everlasting all upon his precious blood. He created all things in heaven and in earth; yet was he less than the mighty God, he must be a creature (for we have no rule to measure any thing between creature and Deity, any more than we have Deity itself) and then have created himself, which
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is a palpable contradiction. Was he a creature, he could not merit for another. Not the highest seraphs in glory can merit any thing with God; being creatures, they can do but their duty. The doctrine of supererogation therefore hath never been taught among them, nor received the least countenance by the true church on earth. Detested by the former, and abhorred by the latter, it seems to confine its claims to Rome only. But the meritorious life and death of the great mediator have purchased righteousness for the unrighteous, remission of sins for the guilty, and a well-founded right to an inheritance among all the sanctified.

4. View the grand mystery of your election unto grace, peace and glory, by the triune God; to raise your hearts to admire, believe, love, worship, and obey, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. See the glorious Three presented to us, in the great work, by the Apostle Peter. *Elect according to the fore-knowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ*, 1 Peter, i. 2. They all co-operate in the matchless work to our salvation. 1. Our adoption is by all Three; the Father doth adopt us in Christ by the Spirit of adoption. 2. The

2. The covenant of grace is made and confirmed by all Three. 3. The church is gathered, instructed, preserved and saved by all Three. 4. We are baptized in the name of all Three; and therefore devoted, dedicated, and consecrated to the service of all Three. 5. In the Lord's Supper, the Father invites and entertains us, gives us his Son for our head, husband and Saviour; Christ gives us his body and blood to nourish us; and the Spirit mortifies our lusts, strengthens our faith, renews our repentance, inflames our zeal, pacifies our consciences, purifies our hearts, assures us of the favor and love of God, seals our pardon to us, and seals us up to the day of redemption. Thus the love of the Father, the grace of the Son, and the communion and peace of the Holy Ghost, are so plentifully vouchsafed to experimental Christians in this ordinance. He therefore who hath the Father hath the Son and Spirit also. Hence let all the enemies of the Free-grace of God, Papists, Socinians, Arians, Pelagians, and Semi-Pelagians, know, that all the good which is done in us, for us, or by us, is done by the Lord Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit alone.

To conclude, let us look upon the Son, and admire and bless the Father; look up-
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on the Father, and bless the Son; look upon Father and Son, and bless the Spirit; look upon all Three, and adore and love, believe and obey, all the Three co-equal persons, subsisting in the same most single Godhead; and thus have access to the Father, through the Son, and by the Spirit, till a nearer accession in glory shall consummate our unspeakable felicity.

Now to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, Three Persons, but one Jehovah, be all honor, might, majesty, dominion, and praise, now, and for evermore. Amen.



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